

4 March 1974

NOTE FOR: NIO/Middle East

1. Attached is a memorandum on the SR-71 mission scheduled for tomorrow, 5 March 1974. It is self-explanatory.

2. The only aspect of this flight which needs firming up, in my judgment, relates to the question of whether the environment in [redacted] This depends on whether [redacted] that this mission will take place, or whether there have been any additional understandings reached during Dr. Kissinger's trip. I believe the Director should be on record pointing out that this aspect of the mission should be clear prior to overflight. George also regards this as important (we discussed this earlier in the afternoon).

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3. I have discussed this aspect with [redacted] (1550 hrs) in DIA who said that SAC was considering the flight to be under the same ground rules as the last mission--that is, no advance notification and a potentially hostile environment. He will reconfirm this understanding.

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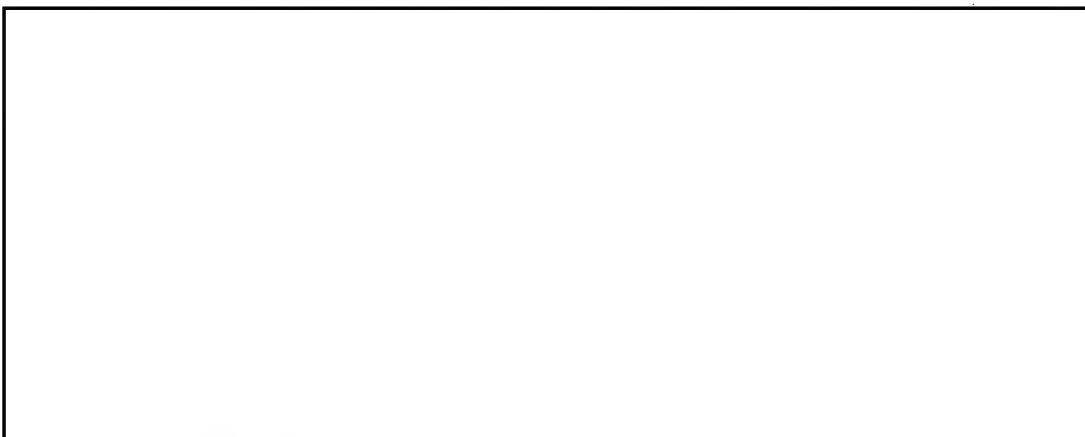
4 March 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Plan for 5 March 1974 SR-71 Mission

1. This memorandum and the attached chart provide data on the nominal timing of flight activity, film processing, and initial reporting for the SR-71 mission planned for 5 March. The code name BUSY PILOT has been assigned to these missions to differentiate them from the GIANT REACH flights that were flown earlier for unilateral US intelligence purposes.

2. As shown on the attached chart, the timing of the mission and subsequent activity will be as follows:



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b. About four and a half to five hours will be required to remove the film from the aircraft and fly it by dedicated aircraft to Eastman Kodak in Rochester for processing.

c. The first portion of film should arrive at NPIC at about 0230 EDT Wednesday, 6 March. This film will be from the Technical Objective Camera (TEOC). The second shipment containing the Optical Bar Camera (OBC) materials--the film [redacted]

[redacted] should arrive at about 0900 EDT Wednesday.

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25X6

d. NPIC estimates that it will require at least 72 hours to prepare the initial report and have it in finished form--that is, completed by Saturday morning, 9 March. The photo interpretation will be thorough and need to be handled very systematically to assure that the initial "baseline" report is accurate in all respects and has been thoroughly reviewed.

e. According to present planning, NPIC will report [redacted] through normal channels and procedures, the intelligence derived from the BUSY PILOT mission, in the same form as for the previous SR-71 missions. This reporting will be taking place in parallel with the preparation of the special report [redacted]

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3. Considering all aspects, it appears that 10 March (Sunday) or perhaps 11 March are realistic target dates for the availability of the final initial report for passage to officials in Washington. This timing can be modified somewhat if other factors dictate.

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